

CIA/OGCR /PN 61.2684/75 ITEM 001 UNCLASSIFIED--PRC CITY BRIEF KUEI-LIN

CIA JUL75

01 OF 01

CIA/OGCR / PN 61.2684/75

ITEM 001

PRC CITY BRIEF

Kuei-lin 桂林



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CIA/OGCR/GD
PN 61.2684/75
July 1975

KUEI-LIN
(pronounced gway lin)

Chinese romanized system of spelling:	Guilin																									
Meaning in Chinese:	cassia woods																									
Location:	25°17'N 110°17'E (approx. latitude of Miami, Florida)																									
Elevation:	500 feet above sea level																									
Population:	320,000																									
Climate:	<table><thead><tr><th></th><th><u>Jan</u></th><th><u>April</u></th><th><u>July</u></th><th><u>Oct</u></th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mean daily maximum temperature (°F)</td><td>55</td><td>74</td><td>93</td><td>81</td></tr><tr><td>Mean daily minimum temperature (°F)</td><td>41</td><td>59</td><td>76</td><td>62</td></tr><tr><td>Mean number of days with precipitation</td><td>10</td><td>18</td><td>14</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>Mean monthly precipitation (inches)</td><td>1.6</td><td>9.4</td><td>8.0</td><td>2.6</td></tr></tbody></table>		<u>Jan</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Oct</u>	Mean daily maximum temperature (°F)	55	74	93	81	Mean daily minimum temperature (°F)	41	59	76	62	Mean number of days with precipitation	10	18	14	7	Mean monthly precipitation (inches)	1.6	9.4	8.0	2.6
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KUEI-LIN

General

Kuei-lin's beautiful scenery earns it the reputation of being the number one scenic city in China. Its name -- through an ancient maxim that Chinese school children learn -- has become synonymous with natural beauty: "Kuei-lin's mountains and rivers are the finest under heaven." Situated in a small basin in the northeastern corner of the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region, the city is surrounded by and interspersed with numerous steep-sided hills that form the extraordinarily exotic terrain long renowned by poets and painters. The landscape has been created by the erosion of the limestone surface, forming steep isolated hills, caverns, and underground channels termed karst. Water seeping through the rock formations and cracks into the numerous caves in and near Kuei-lin continues to form stalactites and stalagmites that rival the beauty of the hills on the surface.

Although Kuei-lin is most famous for its scenery, the city has become increasingly important in recent years as a regional-manufacturing center. Its industrial development is aided by good rail and road transport that connect the city to the Yangtze region and to the remainder of Kwangsi. Kuei-lin is located on the west bank of the Li Chiang -- an important tributary of the Hsi Chiang, the major river system of South China. The Li is navigable to small shallow-draft boats. Kuei-lin administratively is a municipality under the jurisdiction of Kwangsi Province. Like all major PRC cities, the municipal boundaries of Kuei-lin have been enlarged to incorporate a number of smaller towns, rural villages, and surrounding agricultural land. The estimated total municipal area probably approaches 300 square miles of which the built-up area of Kuei-lin proper is approximately 5 percent.

Kuei-lin has a subtropical climate characterized by very wet, hot, and long summers, pleasant spring and autumn seasons, and a short period of somewhat cooler and fairly dry weather. Almost twice as much rain (74 inches) is recorded in Kuei-lin annually than in Washington, D.C. Nearly 80 percent of the total rainfall occurs from April through September; particularly heavy amounts of rain (14 to 16 inches) are received in May and June. During the long rainy season, about 1 day in 2 gets some rain. No pronounced winter season exists, although during January and February the temperature drops on several occasions to freezing or a few degrees

below. Most visitors find the months of November through April the most pleasant with November probably being the best month of all.

Until recently, very few visitors came to Kuei-lin -- a 2-day journey from Kuang-chou via Heng-yang in southern Hunan Province -- and most of those came by rail. Today, however, many more visitors come to Kuei-lin, and the majority come by air. A 1-hour trip connects Kuang-chou with Kuei-lin's Li-chia-tsun Airfield located southeast of the city.

History

During the empire-unifying Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), the Emperor realized that by building a 2-1/2 mile long canal and by improving 12 miles of a small stream in northeastern Kwangsi he could send provisions by water all the way from the Yangtze to his southern armies in the Kuang-chou area, thereby bypassing the extremely difficult overland transportation problem caused by the hills and mountains -- the Nan Ling -- marking the drainage divide between the Yangtze and Hsi Chiang. Thus, the Hsi Chiang, which flows northward from Kwangsi through Hunan Province to the Yangtze, became linked by the short Ling-ch'u Canal to a tributary of the southward-flowing Li Chiang which, in turn, flows into the Hsi Chiang. The Hsi Chiang and its tributaries interconnect the rich, rice-growing lowlands of Kwangsi and Kwangtung. Kuei-lin was founded in 214 B.C. as a way station on the Li Chiang, and the settlement developed as a result of the traffic on the new inland waterway. Today, the canal apparently is used only as a drainage ditch and an irrigation aqueduct.

Under the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) the city became the provincial capital, an administrative designation retained until 1914 when the seat of government was relocated in Nan-ning. Kuei-lin once more became the capital in 1936, and during the anti-Japanese war it was a stronghold of resistance; printing houses, newspapers, and acting companies took refuge there, and the population grew rapidly. Much of the city was heavily damaged or destroyed during this time. In 1954 the provincial capital once again was established in Nan-ning. Kuei-lin continued to grow, however, and this time as an industrial town.

Kuei-lin Today

Kuei-lin is an attractive city with a modern look. It is neatly laid out, consisting of a large number of two- and three-storied stucco buildings interspersed with blocks of older mud

and straw dwellings with hardwood portals standing open to the street. The few main streets are fairly wide, planted with trees, and used principally by carts and cyclists. Several prominent limestone hills rise within the city proper, and from these vantage points panoramic views of the city and surrounding area can be had. Outside the city, but adjacent to it, are other hills, many of them containing caves, statues, rock carvings, and temples of their remains. Picturesque names for these hills abound -- Seven Star Hill, Elephant Trunk Hill, Treasure Hoard Hill, and many others. A number of small lakes, ponds, and pools are scattered throughout Kuei-lin, mostly in the southern and western sections of the city. The two largest lakes in the southern part of Kuei-lin are the focus of an attractive park. Even more spectacular scenery is visible by boat on a trip downstream from Kuei-lin. A famous local attraction on the Li Chiang is the fishermen who use trained cormorants -- the necks are tied so that only small fish can be swallowed -- to dive and seize marketable size fish and return the prize to the fishermen's boats.

In 1949 the city had only a printing house and a few small factories and handicraft industries. Since then numerous factories have been built and Kuei-lin now produces nitrogen fertilizer, spun silk, cotton cloth, tires, medicines, rubber, machinery, and other products. Machine-tool manufacturing made especially prominent gains during the Cultural Revolution. Today Kuei-lin is also producing electronic components, semiconductor apparatus, transistors, and transistor radios. The city's traditional local products, such as wine, bean products, candy, hot sauce, bamboo chopsticks, umbrellas, and perfume, complement the diversity of its modern industrial output. Nevertheless, Kuei-lin is only important as a local center of manufacturing; its progress is measured by a 1949 standard of negligible industrial production.

Industrial development is not an unmixed blessing and environmental deterioration threatens the city's scenic beauty. Smoke from some suburban industries fouls the air locally and industrial effluents allegedly float on the once-transparent Li Chiang. Steps, however, are being taken to reduce pollution and to make the city once again one of the principal tourist spots in the country. Included in the development plan are a hotel overlooking the Li Chiang, a new theater, and road and airport improvements. Only a few hundred foreign visitors, most of them overseas Chinese, come to Kuei-lin each year now, but when tourist facilities have been completed, thousands of visitors are expected annually.